Miami Herald 2/13/72

CBS Program to Explore Myths About China

NEW YORK — "Misunderstanding China," an exploration of a century of myths, stereotypes and other misconceptions Americans have had about the Chinese, will be presented as a CBS News Special Sunday, Feb. 20 at 6 p.m. on CBS (Ch. 4). CBS News Correspondent Charles Kuralt will be the reporter on the broadcast — to be presented on the eve of President Nixon's arrival in Peking.

"60 MINUTES," normally broadcast at this hour, will be presented in a special edition at 9:30 p.m. on this date, previewing in detail the President's journey to the People's Republic of

spondents Mike Wallace and Morley Safer will cohost this 11th-hour look at the historic trip.

"Misunderstanding China" traces Sino-American relationships back some 100 years, beginning with the arrival of the first Americans in China.

It illustrates — through the use of Hollywood feature films, official government film, newsreels and old pulp magazines and cartoons — how Americans have stereotyped and characterized the Chinese.

It also examines America's view of China during the past 20 years, as influenced both by old stereotypes and by new

"In the past 20 years," said producer-writer Irv Drasnin, "China as an issue has divided America, played a part in Congressional witchhunts and Presidential campaigns and great national debates. We have argued about the Chinese and we have fought the Chinese and all this time we haven't really known very much about them."

"The point is that we think we know something about them when all we have seen are laundrymen and waiters, and Fu Manchu and Charlie Chan. All these images and our view of them are part of this broadcast," continued Drasnin.

to see past the images and illusions that have distorted our view of the Chinese people and our view of the American experience in China. We have stereotyped other people, but our stereotypes of the Chinese have been spectacular."

"What we think about something influences what we do about it," added Drasnin. "We have done many things in China, almost all of them based not on any real knowledge of the Chinese but on our feelings about them. What we have done in China is also based on our view of ourselves. This broadcast is as much about ourselves as it is about the

arts & pleasures

a daily critique by WWD

THE TUBE

China

After having pretended for more than 20 years that China was an island off the coast of Asia, Americans have been bombarded this week with glimpses of reality. Our leader, for whom the central issue in the 1960 campaign was whether we should be prepared to wage war to defend our illusion that China was an offshore island, is now going to inspect the mainland exotics at firsthand. At the same time that the newspapers informed us the President was being given a crash course on China, other media were doing the same for the public — Newsweek devoted an issue to China; virtually every TV channel has given its viewers a look behind what used to be called "the Silken Curtain."

What is most remarkable about all this is that very few of the facts presented this week would be new to alert Europeans or even well-read Americans — that they are being presented to the public as "news" is a feat even Pravda would have to admire.

One of the things that makes CBS' "Misunderstanding China" (to be aired Sunday at 6 p.m.) an exemplary documentary is that, instead of simply putting forward information about the Chinese in a "now it can be told" tone, the picture of contemporary China is presented in the context of the decades of ignorance and almost willful misunderstanding that preceded our sudden desire for the facts.

Teddy Roosevelt, the documentary points out, called the Chinese "an immoral, degenerate, worthless race." Even Emerson, imagining the nations bringing their contributions to civilization to a gathering, thought the Chinese would have nothing to bring but tea. Pulp fiction created the image of the Chinese as a race of arch-villains, an image upon which Hollywood lavished all the power of its special effects.

The Japanese air war against China led to a new sympathy on the part of Hollywood, but it also created new, equally false stereotypes: The Chinese were a race of superstitious, oppressed children. As the excellent narration puts it: "Our best-known actors and actresses led the Chinese to safety and salvation . . . China was the background for our superiority, a theatre for our idealism."

Not all the misconceptions came from Hollywood. Many of the Americans who went to China were missionaries, whose only concern was, as Noel Coward once put it, "to lead the wretched heathen to the light," or, as a missionary film explains, "They carry the yoke of Satan — this is the yoke we must lift."

Having shown, through marvelous clips from newsreels, travelogs and Hollywood features, the source of many of our misconceptions about China, the program is somewhat easy on the press, not driving home the way newspapers and magazines tended to reinforce myths rather than dispel them, not mentioning, for example, the effect of the missionary approach to China on the son of missionaries, Henry Luce.

The CBS documentary does a brilliant job of showing how misconceptions about China formed in the early decades of this century were echoed in the distortions about China that the American press encouraged after 1949, how, for example, the Cultural Revolution, an event still difficult to understand, was used simply as a pretext to revive the notion of the Chinese as "faceless hordes."

The program ends with some beautiful color photography by European cameramen showing everyday life in China today; some kindergarten children marching and imitating elephants; some young people strolling quietly in lovely public parks.

Similarly, one of a group of spectacular color photographs by French journalist Marc Riboud, in the Metropolitan Museum's exhibit, "Behind the Great Wall," shows families picking wild flowers that grow along the Great Wall, again an illuminating contrast to the photos of the Chinese simply as fanatics.

The Metropolitan show also puts China into a context: It is easier to understand pictures of Red Guards exhorting people after having seen Robert Capa's striking 1938 photograph of "student-soldiers" rallying the public against the Japanese. The photos that give one the greatest understanding of the enormous transitions and crises the Chinese have undergone in the last 40 years are those of the incomparable Henri-Cartier-Bresson. There are also some haunting family-album type shots of the present leaders of China taken during the '30s by Edgar Snow, who lived with them when they were "in hiding," who did more than any American to help his people understand China, and who died ironically, sadly at the very moment that understanding began to take place.

— HOWARD KISSEL

THE DANCE

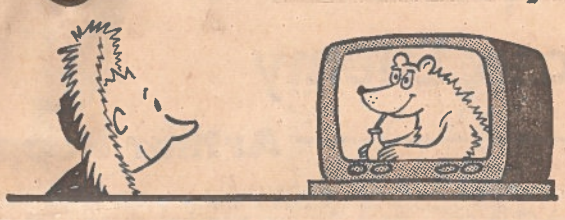
National Ballet

This week, the National Ballet is at City Center, which makes it a good place to avoid.

The company's production of "The Sleeping Beauty" is amiable and, to some degree, enjoyable, but its program of five short works is just too bad to be true. "Beauty" is a luxurious and ambitious production, conceived in the grand style. The sets and costumes are lush and the elegance and structure of the Petipa think wistfully of a visit to the dentist, or of being trapped in a stalled subway train. The technique was inept enough to be funny, the phrasing was nonexistent and the line and definition could have been bettered by an amoeba.

The company's "Les Sylphides" is filled with jetes that pop instead of arch and arabesques penches that seem to be fighting a strong headwind. The members of the corps looks as if they were positioned

Terrence O'Flaherty



This Dance Is Taken

IT MAY be difficult to learn what the Chinese people have been doing during the communications blackout, but judging from the four-act ballet staged for the Nixons, it is easy to see what they HAVEN'T been doing. They haven't been dancing.

There may be mysteries in politics but there are none in art.

Ballet for Nixons

Much of the performance of "The Red Detachment of Women" was carried on television yesterday morning and inasmuch as it was produced by the wife of Mao Tse-tung it cannot be dismissed as a mere divertissement for statesmen. Obviously it was the best of the People's Republic entertainment. Like American television, it reached for the lowest common denominator and found it. Unlike American TV, it was sought in the artistry of the dance rather than situation comedy.

★ ★ ★

THE POLITICAL intent of the plot is obvious and needs no comment. Even a half-wit could tell what was happening. The disappointment was in the quality of the dancing itself. Like most revolutionary art it was constructed of muscle instead of the spirit, but even the muscularity lacked the boisterous, folkdance skill of Russia's Moiseyev troupe, the only handy comparison.

What the ballet DID have, however, was the strength that comes from simple dedication and pride which is found in U.S. junior high school productions and disappears almost immediately thereafter. In the end it was the production's honesty which stays in the mind. It was another aid in understanding the Chinese which, after all, is the purpose of the trip.

It also served to recall the claim of writer-producer Irving S. Drasnin in his fascinating CBS program "Misunderstanding China" that the American attitude toward China in this century has been determined by the images of the Chinese found in political cartoons, dime novels, comic books and Hollywood movies. It is from them — not books or direct contact — that we have known our new friends in the past.

★ ★ ★

'Charlie Chan'

DRASNIN'S documentary included a fascinating collection of scenes from "The Mask of Fu Manchu," "The Bitter Tea of General Yen," "Oil for the Lamps of China," "The Mysterious Mr. Wong" and other films drumming home the stereotype of the sinister Chinese, which already had been introduced on the covers of adventure magazines.

"To be sure, some Chinese possessed all the wisdom of the East — like Charlie Chan, who was no more a real Chinese than the actors who played him. There were six of them and all spoke as if they had learned English from a fortune cookie," observed narrator Charles Kuralt. Even the good images Americans found in the novels of Pearl Buck were another stereotype.

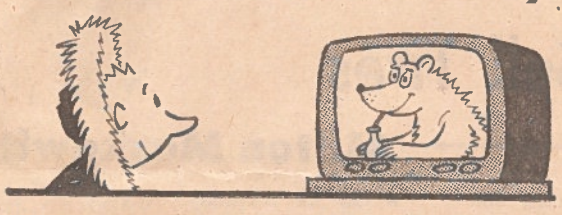
★ ★ ★

OTHER misunderstandings were documented by the program: Despite the 4000 American missionaries who descended upon the 4000-year-old Chinese civilization and pronounced it heathen, the actual number of conversions was less than one per cent of the population . . . At the height of the U.S. mercantile invasion of China the Chinese market represented only 4 per cent of America's total foreign trade.

"In the past 22 years China has still been a hazy image in American minds rather than a reality. Almost everything Americans and Chinese know of each other is what their governments have wanted them to know. The purpose of this program is to see beyond the images and stereotypes and begin to see the Chinese, and ourselves, more realistically," concluded Kuralt.

We seem to be doing our part. Let's hope it

Terrence O'Flaherty



Instant China

"FROM EUROPE we took our basic ideas — our concepts of law and civilization. From China we took some tea and silk and porcelain," observed Charles Kuralt in the informative CBS documentary, 'Misunderstanding China.' The following quotes from that program provide the best capsule history of our relations I have found.

Charles Kuralt

"The first American troops entered China in 1900. They came, uninvited, for the best of purposes — to rescue American traders and missionaries from a Chinese uprising against all foreigners. Once there, they stayed.

"The sight of uniformed Americans landing in China became familiar. Others had arrived ahead of us—first the British followed by the French, the Germans, the Russians and Japanese. Each power claimed a piece of Chinese territory for itself — except America. We thought that made us different but, to the Chinese, ALL foreigners looked alike.

"By today's standards only a handful of U.S. troops marched into China but in any number they were offensive to the Chinese.

★ ★ ★

"CONSTANT REMINDERS were the foreign warships in Shanghai harbor — American ships among them — anchored there not as visitors but as occupants. The ships brought the men and the arms. They also brought the missionaries. To the new frontier the Americans would bring civilization — and salvation.

Whatever the good intent of the missionary, to the Chinese he, too, was an intruder in uniform — an imperialist of righteousness on a 20th Century crusade . . .

"The only Chinese we knew were the few who imitated Americans. We thought ALL Chinese wanted to be like us. Their world was controlled by outsiders and they wanted to change it.

★ ★ ★

"BEGINNING EARLY in this century, increasing numbers of Chinese believed revolution was the only way. Sun Yat Sen was the first Chinese leader we could identify. Americans called him the George Washington of China. And that was based on another myth — that China's desire to be strong and independent was a desire for democracy. Americans confused the Chinese revolution with their own.

"In the 1920s and '30s America responded to another revolutionary, Chiang Kai-shek (and his wife), both Christians, who seemed to confirm what the missionaries had promised: China was becoming a democracy united behind Christian leadership. It was a myth that would defeat American policy throughout the war and after. America took little notice of Mao Tse-tung who led a peasant army and talked of agrarian reform.

"The country united around Chiang was not China but America. we expected that China would help fight our war against Japan if we provided the arms and the leadership. But the war being fought in China was between the Communists and the Nationalists, the latter bolstered by $3 billion in U.S. aid.

★ ★ ★

"BY 1949 the Communists had won and the Nationalists had retreated to Taiwan. The American merchants went home. So did the Christianity and the Democracy — all stamped 'REFUSED' by the culture to which they had been brought. Bewildered voices at home spoke accusingly of the loss of China. It is clear now that China was never ours to lose. For the first time in a hundred years the only troops that marched the streets of China were Chinese. Whatever their politics, these Chinese were united against foreign domination. Their leaders drove in a captured 1941 Buick and much of their army was equipped with American weapons also captured from their enemy. That made America an enemy too.

"And there — in the tradition of Khans and emperors before him — stood Mao Tse-tung . . ."

It is Mao's China that President Nixon is visit-

THE NEW YORK TIMES, MONDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 1972

TV: China Examined in Plethora of Documentaries

By JOHN J. O'CONNOR

Until last July, when President Nixon announced dramatically that he was going to China, the country virtually did not exist for American television viewers. Then, with the thaw, came the deluge of documentary specials. And, as cameras follow the President's trip this week, more than a few viewers may be forgiven an odd sense of déjà vu. So much, or so little, for the power of television.

The documentaries have not, of course, erased the ignorance and misconceptions about China that have existed for decades, perhaps centuries. But, with bits of travelogue and dollops of analysis, they have dented the surface considerably.

Frequently, much of the material covered in "exclusive" films has looked suspiciously similar—the same commune, the same example of acupuncture, the same factory, the same landmarks. And inevitably the analysis has focused on similar aspects of Chinese life—the cult of Mao, the regimentation, the indoctrination of the young, the familiar and almost Puritan spirit of the peasant.

What may have been lacking in one news special was likely to be found by the persistent viewer in another. On public television, for example, Channel 13/WNET gave two showings to a British Broadcasting Corporation historical survey called "The Struggle for China," the first time with additional interview commentary, the second without. Narrated by James Mason, this production offered in historical newsreel footage one of the best and clearest summaries of China upheavals in the 20th century.

●

Tonight at 8 the channel will present "Two Faces of China," described as a "panoramic hymn to China," filmed in 1965 shortly before the Cultural Revolution by the Swiss photojournalist René Burri. This will be followed at 9:30 by "Mission to Yenan," produced by Joe De Cola and Peter Davis as a reminiscence of the last time, 28 years ago, American representatives met on a friendly basis with the Chinese.

Part of "Mission to Yenan" was seen on an often-extraordinary National Broadcasting Company program last Wednesday. Called "China: Lost and Found," it was overseen by John Chancellor.

To start, Pearl Buck presented a capsule history of China, observing that "truth has not dictated our relationship with China, images have." Those images, Miss Buck noted, have swung unrealistically between the savage hordes and the founts of wisdom, between the gross and the ideal.

Later, in filmed interviews, Mr. Chancellor introduced four China experts who were caught up in the American hysteria of the McCarthy years: John Stewart Service, John Paton Davies, John K. Emerson and Raymond P. Ludden. In tracing the decisions that led the United States to "backing the wrong dragon," they recalled the loud chorus of almost spiritual anti-Communisn. Added Mr. Chancellor:

"One of the voices in the chorus, incidentally, was Richard M. Nixon's."

Among other news specials, more effective as a group than individually, there has been "Mao's China," a two-hour Channel 5 presentation with recent film recorded by Yugoslavs, and "China . . . An Open Door?," a coproduction of The Associated Press and Mizlou Productions, narrated by the A.P.'s veteran Far East correspondent, John Roderick.

With original and recent film footage still in short supply, the broadcasters have been hard-pressed for new story angles. One of the most effective was devised by C.B.S. News for an hour called "Misunderstanding China." With Perry Wolff as executive producer and Charles Kuralt as reporter, the examination of American attitudes toward China was presented last night at 8.

Going back to the Thomas Nast cartoons of the 19th century, with their references to the Chinese as "coolie, slave, pauper, rat-eater," Mr. Kuralt picked over a "chop suey of prejudices" that has persisted rather startingly in literature, comic books and movies to the present day. Even the Encyclopaedia Britannica, he noted, made reference to the Chinese as "cold, cunning and distrustful."

A usual cliché is "no tickee, no washee." Or "One from Column A and one from Column B and a fortune cookie. You'll be hungry an hour later." And the history of attitudes, Mr. Kuralt maintains, has a lot to do with the history of events.

With numerous clips from old and not-so-old movies, the program solidly proved Mrs. Buck's observation about images invariably swinging between the gross and the ideal. One example, ironically enough, offered Hollywood's idealized peasants in Miss Buck's "The Good Earth."

●

Pointing out that the road to understanding between the two countries will be long, Mr. Kuralt concluded that "there is some baggage we will not need—the old movies and pulp magazines, the old fears and false images, our emotional inheritance. That's too heavy a bruden. Maybe we can leave it all behind."

Eventually balance may be attained. At the moment, as the majority is somewhat awed and the small minority gnashes its ideological teeth, balance is difficult. Bill D. Moyers, on Public TV's "This Week," is one of the few TV commentators who has bothered to interview a young refugee from Mao's China, an avowed Communist who resented total regimentation. More of that side is needed.

Eventually, perhaps.

The Washington Post STYLE People / Leisure / Comics

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 1972 B1

The Peking Visit Telecasts: An Illusion of Indifference

Commentary

By Henry Mitchell

Honest men may differ on the question of Mrs. Nixon's chopsticks since "proficiency" is a flexible word; and honest eyes looking at the round balls in front of each plate at the Peking banquet may variously see them as pomegranates (as I guessed) or oranges (as the China expert from Harvard thought) or bowls of Jello (as correspondent John Hart surmised for reasons inscrutable).

You certainly couldn't tell with any certainty from the picture on CBS (WTOP, Channel 9) in yesterday's predawn report of the President's trip to China.

And while these were among the high points of my own 14 hours beside the TV set and CBS, there's no need to begin with a quibble.

The main point is that trifles start seeming interesting, or indeed urgently critical, by the time a camera has intruded them on your attention for half an hour.

Through no fault of CBS (and other reporters watching the other networks found much the same) the extremely significant visit with Mao Tse-tung could not be shown, while the bulk of pictures from Peking that were shown were monotonous.

Twenty shots of the Gate of Heavenly Peace are as good as 200 shots; and once you've satisfied yourself that the Great Hall of the People is almost as graceless as the Rayburn Building, there's no real need to marvel at it indefinitely.

The trouble—and it's a real trouble—is that television quickly bogs down without novelties to delight the eye. Activity, and not necessarily reality, is what shows and counts in a TV camera's eye.

The greeting of the President by Premier Chou and the prompt reception by Chairman Mao were marks of singular interest and honor—but the TV pictures of empty streets contradicted that reality and produced an illusion of indifference to the Nixon visit.

It is clearly more significant if the talks go well with Mao than if half a million people mill in the streets, but the illusion of electronic pictures is so strong that this point is easily overlooked while watching. Thus, television, merely by honestly focusing its cameras on action, can distort or obscure the importance of an event.

Without exciting pictures it is at last understandable how a commentator could be driven to observe that Chinese wine is "like liquid razor blades" and that Mrs. Nixon was drinking it "perhaps to her cost." This did not mean Mrs. Nixon was chugging it down—merely that the speaker was a bit desparate to fill up the time.

Only when the rare moments of activity were kaleidoscoped, putting hours into minutes, did television seem exciting, in retrospective summaries.

And even then there was an irony not lost on the multi-houred viewer:

The excellent CBS documentary, "Misunderstanding China," which began the network's marathon coverage at 6 p.m. Sunday, warned that for 100 years America has thought of China in terms of dangerous images rather than in terms of fact and knowledge.

Soon thereafter the network began showing its largely accidental images for the next 13 hours; off and on.

Such is the hazard of television. If the Peking scene had been hugely active or marvelously emotional, everybody would say the coverage was glorious. As it was, the empty plazas all but lied about the importance of the day.

Today's Broadcast Schedule

Alth[illegible]h television coverage of President Nixon's trip is not firmly scheduled, partly because of the President's flexible travel plans, the following times are the best estimates of Washington stations for their special reports from China today (subject in each case to further spot coverage whenever events warrant):

- *Channel 4 (WRC-NBC) — 7 to 9 a.m. ("The Today Show") and 1130 p.m. to midnight.*
- *Channel 7 (WMAL-ABC) — 7:30 to 8 a.m., 4:30 to 5:10 p.m. and 11:30 p.m. to 1 a.m.*
- *Channel 9 (WTOP-CBS) — 7 to 8 a.m. and 10:30 to 11 p.m. It is thought that the 7 a.m. program will show the President with Premier Chou at a cultural exhibition.*

This morning in Washington will find Peking in its evening hours since that capital is 13 hours ahead of our time.

24 Feb 72

He ran a second column today. Are you getting these from a clipping service? If so I'll stop sending them.

Who knows what the morrow bringeth?

L. Hamm

Charles Kuralt

...sight of uniformed Americans landing in China became familiar. Others had arrived ahead of us—first the British followed by the French, the Germans, the Russians and Japanese. Each power claimed a piece of Chinese territory for itself — except America. We thought that made us different but, to the Chinese, ALL foreigners looked alike.

"By today's standards only a handful of U.S. troops marched into China but in any number they were offensive to the Chinese.

★ ★ ★

"CONSTANT REMINDERS were the foreign warships in Shanghai harbor — American ships among them — anchored there not as visitors but as occupants. The ships brought the men and the arms. They also brought the missionaries. To the new frontier the Americans would bring civilization — and salvation.

2 Carto
5 10
garoo
7 News
11 Dick
40 Tenn
7 A.M.
14 Groun
4 News
2 Romp
4 3
7 Movie
ly."
(Part
rate,"
music
star-
affai
inary
(Par
11 40

arts & pleasures

a daily critique by WWD

THE TUBE

After having pretended for more than 20 years that China was an island off the coast of Asia, Americans have been bombarded this week with glimpses of reality. Our leader, for whom the central issue in the 1960 campaign was whether we should be prepared to wage war to defend our illusion that China was an offshore island, is now going to inspect the mainland exotics at firsthand. At the same time that the newspapers informed us the President was being given a crash course on China, other media were doing the same for the public — Newsweek devoted an issue to China; virtually every TV channel has given its viewers a look behind what used to be called "the Silken Curtain."

What is most remarkable about all this is that very few of the facts presented this week would be new to alert Europeans or even well-read Americans — that they are being presented to the public as "news" is a feat even Pravda would have to admire.

One of the things that makes CBS' "Misunderstanding China" (to be aired Sunday at 6 p.m.) an exemplary documentary is that, instead of simply putting forward information about the Chinese in a "now it can be told" tone, the picture of contemporary China is presented in the context of the decades of ignorance and almost wilful misunderstanding that preceded our sudden desire for the facts.

Teddy Roosevelt, the documentary points out, called the Chinese "an immoral, degenerate, worthless race." Even Emerson, imagining the nations bringing their contributions to civilization to a gathering, thought the Chinese would have nothing to bring but tea. Pulp fiction created the image of the Chinese as a race of arch-villains, an image upon which Hollywood lavished all the power of its special effects.

The Japanese air war against China led to a new sympathy on the part of Hollywood, but it also created new, equally false stereotypes: The Chinese were a race of superstitious, oppressed children. As the excellent narration puts it: "Our best-known actors and actresses led the Chinese to safety and salvation . . . China was the background for our superiority, a theatre for our idealism."

Irving's China

Not all the misconceptions came from Hollywood. Many of the Americans who went to China were missionaries, whose only concern was, as Noel Coward once put it, "to lead the wretched heathen to the light," or, as a missionary film explains, "They carry the yoke of Satan — this is the yoke we must lift."

Having shown, through marvelous clips from newsreels, travelogs and Hollywood features, the source of many of our misconceptions about China, the program is somewhat easy on the press, not driving home the way newspapers and magazines tended to reinforce myths rather than dispel them, not mentioning, for example, the effect of the missionary approach to China on the son of missionaries, Henry Luce.

The CBS documentary does a brilliant job of showing how misconceptions about China formed in the early decades of this century were echoed in the distortions about China that the American press encouraged after 1949, how, for example, the Cultural Revolution, an event still difficult to understand, was used simply as a pretext to revive the notion of the Chinese as "faceless hordes."

The program ends with some beautiful color photography by European cameramen showing everyday life in China today; some kindergarten children marching and imitating elephants; some young people strolling quietly in lovely public parks.

Similarly, one of a group of spectacular color photographs by French journalist Marc Riboud, in the Metropolitan Museum's exhibit, "Behind the Great Wall," shows families picking wild flowers that grow along the Great Wall, again an illuminating contrast to the photos of the Chinese simply as fanatics.

The Metropolitan show also puts China into a context: It is easier to understand pictures of Red Guards exhorting people after having seen Robert Capa's striking 1938 photograph of "student-soldiers" rallying the public against the Japanese. The photos that give one the greatest understanding of the enormous transitions and crises the Chinese have undergone in the last 40 years are those of the incomparable Henri-Cartier-Bresson. There are also some haunting family-album type shots of the present leaders of China taken during the '30s by Edgar Snow, who lived with them when they were "in hiding," who did more than any American to help his people understand China, and who died ironically, sadly at the very moment that understanding began to take place.

— HOWARD KISSEL

TV's view of a view: China misunderstood

By Alan Bunce

New York

China?

That's where Charlton Heston leads the American Cavalry against rebelling hordes, to the tune of "Yankee Doodle Dandy." It's where Gregory Peck brings salvation to a land of lost millions longing for Western light. The solution to most of its problems can be summed up in the words of an executive who—with shining eyes—tells his salesmen "oil for the lamps of China, gentlemen—American oil."

Such images of the world's most populous land should be familiar to almost any moviegoer—including the late-night-TV variety—even if a bit stretched. They are among the many caricatures purveyed for Americans by the media over the years, and on CBS-TV Sunday night they make a fascinating study.

'Misunderstanding China'

The 60-minute program is "Misunderstanding China," a CBS News Special which avoids the superhighway of China backgrounding that has led up to President Nixon's trip. Instead, it takes a diverting and informative side road into what Americans have thought about China for 100 years—a view, if you will, of a view.

And a lurid one it is, stretching from pulp-magazine visions of Oriental fiends through World War II's idealized notion of a democratic, unified nation, right up to the Bamboo Curtain. Still drawings bring to life the days when Chinese were laying American railroad tracks. The pulp-magazine image of Chinese master criminals leads naturally into Hollywood's parade of arch-villains or the equally misrepresented Charlie Chan-style sages.

Nearly every popular source is incriminated in this show, as if CBS News were a repository of truth in a propaganda world. The film version of Pearl Buck's "The Good Earth" is pronounced "patronizing," making the Chinese out as superstitious and childlike. World War II documentaries about China are displayed as a ridiculously glorified picture that encouraged Americans to believe what they wanted to—that China was fighting for democracy just like them.

After 1949 the program stresses American ignorance about the Communist era there. Absentee China-watchers and witch-hunting Senators are seen as the primary basis for U.S. attitudes.

Misled

Some day, perhaps, this show itself might be raw material in a study of how people have been misled about China. Yet it does strive to redress the understanding gap. Its own version of the true China story stresses the failure of pride-borne Western policies: Missionaries never did have Chinese trust. Chiang Kai-shek fought World War II to secure his own position. The Communist regime is simply China's own solution to its problems. Once the Americans had gone, it was almost as if they had never been there.

Points like these are made in a briskly paced chain of stock footage and some not-so-stock clips. One is a rare sight for American TV: Mao Tse-tung speaking to an assembly in 1969. Tears well up in the eyes of the young girls who chant and sing to him. And there are shots of the new Shanghai, no longer the sin capital but "one of the safest—and dullest—big cities in the world."

Narrator Charles Kuralt expresses a hope at the end that in the diplomatic mission just ahead Americans can leave behind their false impressions. By the time the trip is over, many Chinese may wish the visitors had left a few other things behind.

Advance men

Like the army of TV advance men who preceded the official party, or the more than 40 tons of equipment that was shipped there in some 1,000 cases. The three commercial networks are pooling most of their resources, but it still adds up to a logistics spectacle, with some 87 news people accompanying the President.

Meanwhile, the China theme has increasingly pervaded radio and TV. Late movies feature old-China-hand adventures. Documentaries and discussions abound. Not only networks but special lineups and local stations have been airing capsule histories. This week in New York, for instance, WNEW-TV carried a two-hour backgrounder made in Yugoslavia called "Mao's China," with former USIA head John Daly as host. It was a problem of false impressions again, according to Mr. Daly. He warned the audience about the Mao slant of this film, and it was interrupted for assessments by journalists.

Perhaps the massive journalistic presence in misunderstood China will be a first and giant step to demythologizing it.

Arts scene

John Crosby, general director of Santa Fe Opera, has announced the repertory for the New Mexico company's 16th season (July 1-Aug. 26). New productions of Aribert Reimann's "Melusine." (in its American premiere), "Don Giovanni," and "Pelleas et Melisande" will be performed, with revivals of "Madama Butterfly," Offenbach's "La Grande Duchesse de Gerolstein," and Strauss's "Salome."

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR
FEB. 18, 1972

the overthrow of Chi
mintang government b
eration Army. Like W
Bresson transmits in

Screen—

By Louise

Henry James obse
shiveriest tales that te
which the ghost appea
"Turn of the Screw."
Turn of the Screw," de
stated, masterful wa
looking children whos
lieves them to be diab
the ghosts of a form
Miss Jessel and a st
Quint.

The story has alrea
cellent film, "The Inno
Kerr as the governess
charges. Now we hav

Honors in the

The membership of
of Arts and Letters ha
the election of 13 new
ing three branches of
the department of ar
Adolph Gottlieb, Phil
Lindner, Stuyvesant V
tino Nivola; in the dep
James Dickey, Julian
Walker Percy, Harris
William D. Snodgrass
ment of music, Arthur

A citation by the Na
is one of many that h
Harold Spivacke who
from the music divisi
Congress after 38 ye
Chief of the division
vacke has seen its hol
its services markedly
grams of live music in
recording laboratory,
creased the library's c
ing and research, was
supervision in 1940.

Your Home—
Not a Haz

Listen as people tell how t
household accidents.

the TRU
that H

It's on more than a thou
your local ra

A Christian Scie